

Week Ending Friday, February 18, 2000

**Statement on Action in the Northern Ireland Peace Process**

*February 11, 2000*

The Good Friday accord, made possible by the courage of leaders from both of Northern Ireland's communities, responded to the people's overwhelming desire for peace. It has been sustained by those leaders making the tough decisions necessary to keep the process moving forward. I regret that the IRA did not give the de Chastelain Commission a more timely commitment on arms decommissioning to maintain the momentum toward full implementation of the accord—a commitment which reflects the wishes of the vast majority of people both in Ireland and in Northern Ireland.

At the same time, we have seen real progress in the past few days. This progress is reflected in the most recent report from the de Chastelain Commission, which states that the commitment made by the IRA's representative "holds out the real prospect of an agreement which would enable [the Commission] to fulfill the substance of its mandate." I urge all the parties to build on that progress, remain engaged, and carry through on their responsibilities to work together to achieve the full implementation of the Good Friday accord.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 7272—National Consumer Protection Week, 2000**

*February 11, 2000*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

Americans have long enjoyed shopping from the comfort of their homes. Door-to-door sales and mail-order catalogs have given

consumers the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of products while saving precious time for family and personal interests. As we move into the digital age, the Internet and other information technologies have made electronic commerce possible, and on-line shopping is opening doors for consumers, established retailers, and small entrepreneurs across the Nation. With these opportunities, however, come certain risks for home shoppers. Advances in telecommunications and marketing technology bring new opportunities for unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent practices that target consumers where they live. It is now easier than ever for perpetrators of fraud to reach shoppers in their homes; consequently, it is more important than ever that consumers know their rights, understand the risks, and know to whom they can turn for recourse.

While there are risks to home shopping, including unwanted solicitations, ill-advised purchases, and failure to deliver items purchased, consumers can protect themselves against these dangers by taking basic, commonsense precautions. Home shoppers should ascertain the seller's location and reputation; give out personal information only if they know who is collecting it, why it is being collected, and how it will be used; and report problems that they cannot resolve with the vendor.

In order to protect consumers, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Justice, the Consumer Federation of America, the American Association of Retired Persons, the National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators, and the National Association of Attorneys General have joined forces to inform Americans about their rights as home shoppers, about merchant responsibilities, and about how to enjoy safely the benefits of shopping from home. This information is available in writing, by telephone, and online, helping to educate consumers about